

Commissioner Susan Whitaker
Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

Susan Whitaker, a veteran tourism marketing industry executive, was appointed in January 2003 to Governor Phil Bredesen's cabinet as Commissioner of Tourist Development. She was reappointed in January of 2007 for a second term.

In this role, Whitaker is responsible for marketing Tennessee's tourism industry domestically and internationally. Tourism is one of Tennessee's largest industries employing more than 175,000 Tennesseans and providing a \$13.3 billion direct economic impact.

Whitaker oversees the development and implementation of statewide tourism's comprehensive marketing, publicity and promotions campaigns, all designed to stimulate growth of tourism in Tennessee. Of note is the state's world-class website, tnvacation.com as well as the state's 14 highly rated Welcome Centers.

In 2008, Whitaker helped position Tennessee as a leader in sustainable tourism by launching Tennessee's Sustainable Tourism initiative. Tennessee's program has been recognized by U.S. Travel Association as a national best practice in sustainable tourism planning and included on the travelgreen.org website.

In 2009, under Whitaker's leadership, the Department of Tourist Development launched Discover Tennessee Trails & Byways. This comprehensive initiative features 16 trails and includes all of Tennessee's 95 counties as well as the state's five National Scenic Byways. Whitaker has also led development of the Tennessee Civil War Trail through the state and serves as co-chair of the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission.

As Tennessee's Tourism Commissioner, Whitaker serves on the Policy Council and Board of Directors for the US Travel Association; the Travel South USA Board of Directors and the University of Tennessee's Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Management Advisory Board. She is a member of the Governor's Jobs Cabinet and the Smoky Mountains Park Commission.